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F.B.I.S.,
2430 E Street, NW,
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30th June 1955

Dear Alan,

I received your letter of 9th June but only on 20th June, which I am afraid did not give me time to write a detailed reply before the 30th. I did, however, send you a signal yesterday, which I hope reached you expeditiously, giving the gist of our feelings about the Hokkaido situation.

To expand on this, we are in something of a dilemma in trying to assess the value of Hokkaido coverage. The area covered is important and extensive and in theory the loss of information from most of the stations would seriously affect the value of our Regional Report. Our intelligence people say that they regard the following stations as "relatively important": -

Chita
Irkutsk
Karaganda
Khabarovsk
Kemerovo
Magadan
Nikolayevsk

Novosibirsk
Tomsk
Ulan Ude
Vladivostok
Yakutsk
Ulan Bator

They would not mind the loss of Birobidzhan, Blagoveschensk and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. On paper we are in general agreement with this assessment, attaching particular importance to Kemerovo, Novosibirsk and Tomsk. An important point is that most of these places are in the R.S.F.S.R., an area from which alternative sources of information (such as newspapers appearing in republican capitals) are virtually non-existent as far as our intelligence services are concerned. Both we and they feel

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that there may be a tendency to stress the importance of covering transmissions from republican capitals at the expense of those from R.S.F.S.R. regional stations, which would be aggravated by the dropping of the Hokkaido coverage.

In theory, therefore, the Hokkaido coverage is of considerable importance. In practice, however, the results are disappointingly meagre. Of the considerable amount of material received here only a small proportion is of sufficient importance to be used. A large part of it consists of information about units (e.g. single collective farms) far too small to be of interest to our consumers; in agriculture, for instance, they do not want statistics about areas smaller than a krai or oblast, and in administration the names of officials in units smaller than these are not wanted. This is not, of course, to say that Hokkaido does not produce quite a number of items of interest and some of importance, but they are a disappointingly small proportion of the whole.

We also have the impression that the seasonal variations in reception conditions in Hokkaido are greater than in most other places, making it difficult to maintain an all-the-year round coverage. We assume that this is the explanation of the disappearance of Chita, Irkutsk, Karaganda, Kemerovo, Novosibirsk, Tomsk and Ulan Ude (of which, as stated above, we consider Kemerovo, Novosibirsk and Tomsk to be the most important stations covered by Hokkaido) between the issue of your coverage schedule of 1st May and that of 1st June.

Our position boils down to this, that we would be very loath to give up the Hokkaido coverage but do not feel justified in urging that you maintain it at any great cost. One way out might be to transfer coverage to other bureaus, if reception conditions make this possible; in this connection we note that Khabarovsk, Vladivostok and Ulan Bator are already partly covered elsewhere than in Hokkaido. The other possibility that has occurred to us is that you might do something on the lines of our Stockholm operation, maintaining perhaps two monitors (or more or less according to seasonal variations in reception) in Hokkaido to record belts for processing elsewhere. This should be a very much more economical operation than maintaining a fully-fledged bureau.

I sympathise with you in this sudden problem with which you have been faced, and I hope that the foregoing gives you objectively our views about the value of the monitoring from Hokkaido. Quite clearly from our point of view alone we could not justify asking you to become involved in expenditure of any magnitude, although naturally we should be glad to feel that a gap was not created in the coverage of the Russian Regional stations which between us we have been trying over the years to make as complete as possible.

Yours sincerely,



B. L. L. L.
